

Message Text

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61

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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R 020315Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9259

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0004

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, BG

SUBJ: CHANGES AND SHRINKAGE IN THE PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT

REF: DACCA 6276

1. PLANNING COMMISSION HAS CONFIRMED PRESS ACCOUNTS OF DECEMBER 30, THAT A.K.M. AHSAN HAS NOW SHIFTED BACK TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO TAKE CHARGE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. THUS AHSAN LASTED EXACTLY 12 DAYS AS PRICIPAL SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION. THE PUBLISHED RATIONALE FOR THE CHANGE WAS THE DESIRE TO REDUCE BY HALF THE SIZE OF THE PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT TO "ECOOMIZE ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE" AND TO DECENTALIZE AUTHORITY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. NO REPLACEMENT FOR AHSAN WAS NAMED AS PRICIPAL SECRETARY. KERAMAT ALI, FOR SOME MONTHS THE SECRETARY TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION, HAS BEEN APPOINTED SECRETARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT DIVSION. ABDUR RAHIM, WHO HAS BEEN SECRETARY TO THE THREE PRESIDENTS, HAS REPLACED KERAMAT ALI AT THE ELECTION COMMISSION.

2. COMMENT. AID OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN TOLD BY ONE MEMBER
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OF THE CIVILIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL THAT THE DESIRE TO GIVE

MORE AUTHORITY TO THE MINISTERIES IS THE REASON FOR THE CHANGES AND THE DECISION NOT TO APPOINT A NEW PRINCIPAL SECRETARY. WE EXPECT TO LEARN OVER THE WEEKEND A MORE PLAUSIBLE REASON, PARTICULARLY FOR THE DEPARTURE OF AHSAN. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT TWO OF THE DCMLAS, TAWAB AND KHAN, WERE UNHAPPY WITH HIS APPOINTMENT, REPORTEDLY IN PART BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT CONSULTED BEFOREHAND. WHATEVER THE EXACT CAUSES FOR THE LATEST CHANGE, THE BANGABHABON APPARENTLY CONTINUES TO BE STAFFED ON AN AD HOC BASIS WHICH SUGGESTS LITTLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIGNATED AND REAL AUTHORITY.
CHESLAW

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